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Mineral Industry Surveys

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TIN IN AUGUST 1999

Domestic consumption of primary tin in August was estimated by the U.S. Geological Survey to be about the same as in the preceding month and in August 1998.

The *Platt's Metals Week* average composite price for tin in August was $3.58 per pound, virtually the same as that in July and down 6% from that in August 1998.

During the first week of September, a labor action in Baltimore, MD, hampered the flow of containerized cargo from the Port of Baltimore. Because tin is usually a containerized item and 80-90% of all tin entering the United States enters through Baltimore, the action drew considerable attention in the tin trading community. Details of the action are as follows: On September 1, after 6 weeks of planning, the newly formed United Container and Rail Haulers of America Inc. set up a picket line at the port. The labor group consisted of truckers that haul containers from the dock to the warehouses or from the dock out of the port. They were protesting their treatment as "independent contractors" and the scarcity of readily available carriers for moving containers, a scarcity that reportedly keeps the truckers waiting idle, without compensation. The labor action ended September 8, and a cooling-off period of 30 days was established (Platt's Metals Week, 1999a).

The Bolivian mining company, Comsur, was reportedly considering a bid for the Huanuni tin and Colquiri zinc-tin mines due to be auctioned off by Corporacíon Minera de Bolivia later this year. Some observers believed the two mines would make a natural fit with Comsur's existing zinc-lead-silver operations and could significantly boost the company's output of base metals, which has declined since the closure of its Asientos Mine last year. Reportedly, Comsur may also consider a bid for the Vinto tin smelter (Metal Bulletin, 1999).

The revival of tin mining over the past 2 years in Malaysia has experienced a slowdown in recent months due to soft tin prices. In the first 2 months of 1999, 5 new tin mines returned to operation, bringing the total of operating tin mines to 43, compared to 38 at the end of 1998. But since February, only 1 more mine has resumed operations, bringing the current total to just 44. There were 15 new mining licences issued since August 1998 to tin miners, and 6 have returned to operation. The Malaysian Chamber of Mines projects a 22% increase for tin-in-concentrate output during 1999 at about 7,000 metric tons compared with 5,750 tons in 1998 (Platt's Metals Week, 1999b).

In the European Union, (EU), the 1994 Directive on Packaging and Packaging Waste set mandatory targets for the recovery and recycling of packaging waste that each member state must achieve by the end of June 2001. Tinplate constitutes a very significant segment of Europe's packaging waste flow, along with aluminum, glass, plastics, etc. In fact, Europe is a larger user of tin for tinplate than is the United States.

The EU directive states that between 50% and 65% of all packaging waste should be recovered by 2001, and within this general target, between 25% and 45% of all packaging waste should be recycled. In order to share the burden equally between all packaging materials, a minimum recycling rate of 15% must be achieved by each packaging material. It also specifies that the recycling and recovery targets should be "substantially increased" by 2006. Despite calls from industry, and reservations among member states to delay the new version, the EU's Waste Unit, which drafted the original paper, is determined to maintain its original timetable. In a move to implement this strategy, EU's Waste Unit recently proposed a new text with very ambitious targets and which also reconsiders other elements of the Directive. The working paper now suggests that, by 2006, 75% of all packaging waste shall be recycled with a minimum of 45% for each packaging material (APEAL NEWS, 1999).

Update

On October 8, 1999, the *Platt's Metals Week* composite price for tin was $3.64 per pound.

References Cited

APEAL NEWS, 1999, EU Aims for higher packaging recycling targets: APEAL NEWS, no. 12, p. 20.
Platt's Metals Week, 1999a, Baltimore back to normal; backup could delay tin: Platt's Metals Week, v. 70, no. 37, September 13, p. 16.
———1999b, Malaysia's tin mining revival slows on low prices: Platt's Metals Week, v. 70, no. 36, September 6, p. 11.
Metal Bulletin, 1999, Comsur pursues expansion plans, eyes Vinto: Metal Bulletin, no. 8408, September 13, p. 11.

TABLE 1
SALIENT TIN STATISTICS 1/

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

		1999		
	1998	July	August	January-August
Production, secondary e/ 2/	16,100	900	900	7,200
Consumption:				
Primary	37,100	3,410 r/	3,510	27,200
Secondary	8,620	844 r/	886	6,780
Imports for consumption, metal	44,000	3,740	NA	NA
Exports, metal	5,020	537	NA	NA
Stocks at end of period	10,700	7,560 r/	7,890	XX
Prices (average cents per pound): 3/				
Metals Week composite 4/	373.26	357.87	358.10	XX
Metals Week New York dealer	261.38	246.62	246.94	XX
London, standard grade, cash	251.00	236.00	237.00	XX
Kuala Lumpur	246.06	234.40	234.44	XX

e/ Estimated. r/Revised. NA Not available. XX Not applicable.

1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits, except prices.

2/ Includes tin recovered from alloys and tinplate. The detinning of tinplate (coated steel) yields only a small part of the total.

3/ From Platt's Metals Week.

4/ The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges, and a risk factor. It normally is substantially higher than other tin prices.

TABLE 2
METALS WEEK COMPOSITE PRICE 1/

(Cents per pound)

Period	High	Low	Average
1998:			
August	386.88	374.45	380.30
September	373.12	364.56	368.24
October	374.40	356.46	366.88
November	380.73	361.99	370.09
December	363.97	350.47	357.58
January-December	413.70	350.47	373.26
1999:			
January	353.37	343.72	348.60
February	364.44	351.24	356.57
March	363.63	356.99	361.19
April	377.31	357.08	365.05
May	384.76	373.61	380.66
June	368.44	354.81	360.01
July	362.56	356.00	357.87
August	362.04	355.27	358.10

1/ The Metals Week composite price is a calculated formula, not a market price, that includes fixed and finance charges, and a risk factor. It normally is substantially higher than other tin prices.

Source: Platt's Metals Week.

TABLE 3
TINPLATE PRODUCTION AND SHIPMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES 1/

(Metric tons, unless otherwise noted)

Period	Tinplate waste (waste, strips, cobbles, etc.) (gross weight)	Tinplate (all forms) Gross weight	Tin content	Tin per metric ton of plate (kilograms)	Shipments 2/
1998	W	1,700,000 r/	8,900 r/	5.2	2,320,000
1999:					
January	W	127,000	695	5.5	185,000
February	W	135,000	702	5.2	177,000
March	W	143,000	757	5.3	218,000
April	W	144,000	770	5.4	195,000
May	W	148,000	795	5.5	196,000
June	W	144,000	748	5.2	207,000
July	W	154,000	748	4.9	193,000
August	W	172,000	830	4.8	NA

r/ Revised. NA Not available. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data.
1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits.
2/ Shipments data from American Iron and Steel Institute monthly publication.

TABLE 4
U.S. TIN IMPORTS FOR CONSUMPTION AND EXPORTS 1/

(Metric tons)

Country or product	1998	1999 June	1999 July	1999 January-July
Imports:				
Metal (unwrought tin):				
Belgium	324	6	--	30
Bolivia	5,160	217	198	1,790
Brazil	4,710	379	501	2,360
Chile	894	490	110	2,380
China	9,870	1,430	1,240	7,290
Hong Kong	840	--	--	95
India	359	--	--	--
Indonesia	7,880	702	640	4,680
Japan	222	--	--	123
Malaysia	1,870	40	--	744
Peru	8,650	1,200	1,020	5,660
Singapore	822	--	--	60
Thailand	540	--	--	20
United Arab Emirates	100	--	--	--
United Kingdom	790	--	19	21
Vietnam	212	--	--	--
Other	736 r/	9	6	186
Total	44,000	4,470	3,740	25,400
Other (gross weight):				
Alloys	1,320	352	486	1,920
Bars and rods	1,160	68	38	515
Foil, tubes, and pipes	3	--	--	1
Plates, sheets, and strip	93	3	(2/)	24
Waste and scrap	4,190	171	102	1,690
Miscellaneous	1,800	231	189	1,160
Total	8,560	825	815	5,300
Exports (metal)	5,020	549	537	3,660

r/ Revised.
1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
2/ Less than 1/2 unit.

Source: Bureau of the Census.

TABLE 5
CONSUMPTION OF TIN IN THE UNITED STATES, BY FINISHED PRODUCT 1/

(Metric tons of contained tin)

Product	1998 r/	1999 July Primary	1999 July Secondary	1999 July Total	1999 August Primary	1999 August Secondary	1999 August Total	1999 January-August total
Alloys (miscellaneous) 2/	W	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Babbitt	1,020	W	W	W	W	W	W	22
Bar tin and anodes	704	21	--	21	20	--	20	159
Bronze and brass	3,610	79 r/	131	210 r/	113	153	266	2,050
Chemicals	8,170	684	W	684	684	W	684	5,370
Collapsible tubes and foil	238	W	W	W	W	W	W	W
Solder	16,900	805	319	1,120	570	338	908	8,240
Tinning	1,100	30	--	30	32	--	32	316
Tinplate 3/	8,900	748	--	748	830	--	830	6,120
Tin powder	W	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
White metal 4/	778	W	--	W	W	--	W	W
Other	4,260	438 r/	94	532 r/	657	95	752	4,540
Total reported	45,700	2,810 r/	544	3,350 r/	2,910	586	3,490	26,800
Estimated undistributed consumption 5/	--	600 r/	300 r/	900 r/	600	300	900	7,200
Grand total	45,700	3,410 r/	844 r/	4,250 r/	3,510	886	4,390	34,000

r/ Revised. W Withheld to avoid disclosing company proprietary data; included with "Other."
1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
2/ Includes terne metal.
3/ Includes secondary pig tin and tin components of tinplating chemical solutions.
4/ Includes pewter, britannia metal, and jewelers' metal.
5/ Estimated consumption of plants reporting on an annual basis.

TABLE 6
DEFENSE LOGISTICS AGENCY
TIN STOCKPILE DISPOSALS 1/

(Metric tons)

Period	Monthly disposals 2/
1998:	
August	250
September	220
October	190
November	--
December	20
January-December	1,900
1999:	
January	20
February	--
March	5
April	30
May	--
June	20
July	220
August	220
Total	515

1/ Data are rounded to three significant digits; may not add to totals shown.
2/ These disposals represent only the daily spot sales program, not the long-term dealer contract sales program.

Source: Defense Logistics Agency.